

REMARKS

Claim 6 is pending. Claims 10 and 15-18 are canceled. Claim 6 is amended.

Claim 16 was objected to under 37 CFR § 1.75(c). This objection has been rendered moot by cancellation of claim 16.

Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ito et al. in view of Applicant's admitted prior art, and further in view of Susuki. Favorable reconsideration of this rejection is earnestly solicited.

Claim 6 has been amended to clarify the feature of an annealing process being conducted for 5 minutes or more after introducing N atoms into the gate oxide film based on FIG.6 and related description. By annealing the gate oxide film for 5 minutes or more after introducing the N atoms, the N atoms thus introduced are settled to the interface between the silicon substrate and the gate oxide film, and the desired concentration of the N atoms at such an interface is achieved. Thereby, dangling bonds at the interface are effectively terminated. Referring to Figure 6, it can be seen that the peak of the N atom distribution causes a shift toward the substrate/gate oxide interface with increasing annealing time (5 minutes, 10 minutes and 20 minutes).

None of the cited references discloses or even suggests such a feature of conducting annealing after introduction of the N atoms for 5 minutes or more so that there occurs concentration of the N atoms at the substrate/gate oxide interface.

Amendment
Serial No. 09/428,052
Attorney Docket No. 970901A

In addition, claim 6 has been amended to introduce the feature of claim 15 as suggested by the Examiner at the interview of December 2, 2004.

The remaining rejections set forth in the Office Action have been rendered moot by cancellation of claims 10 and 15-18.

For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance. However, should the Examiner deem that any further action by applicants would be desirable to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned attorney.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP



Stephen G. Adrian

Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 32,878
Telephone: (202) 822-1100
Facsimile: (202) 822-1111

SGA/arf